CHURCH NEWS

FROM THE NORTHERN COUNTRIES

Edited by
THE NORTHERN ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE
Sigtuna, Sweden

Director: Dr. HARRY JOHANSSON, Sigtuna, Sweden
Editor: Rev. JOHS. LANGHOFF, Øster Egesborg per Mern, Denmark

No. 60 September 30th, 1960.

Bishop Manfred Björkquist Honorary President of the Sigtuna Institute.

At the meeting held with the Board of the Northern Ecumenical Institute at Sigtuna, September 23rd and 24th, varm homage was paid to Bishop Manfred Björkquist, and he was elected the honorary president of the Board. Bishop Björkquist initiated the institute, which was founded in 1940, and since then he has been a very active member of the Board. Referring to his age the Bishop now wanted to resign from his membership of the Board.

In the coming year the institute will arrange a number of conferences, especially on the problems of family life.

Inter-Confessional Research Seminar for Northern Theologians.

Under the direction of Professor K.E. Skydsgaard an inter-confessional seminar was held from 18th-27th August, in which 14 Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish divinity graduates and clergymen took part. The seminar took place in the former manor-house of "Fuglsang" on the island of Lolland and is the first event to be conducted by the Foundation for Inter-Confessional Research under the Lutheran World Federation and headed by Professor Skydsgaard.

Northern Co-Operation on Missions to Seamen.

For many years a certain co-operation has existed among the Northern countries in regard to their missions to seamen, and since 1955 organized by the Northern Seamen's Church Council, which meets once a year for exchange of experiences and planning of joint enterprises. In practice this co-operation means that in each port - except the big much frequented ones - only one mission centre is established at which seamen from all the Northern countries are welcome. Where more than one minister is required in a port, the practice in later years has been to "attach" a Danish clergymen, for instance, to a Swedish seamen's church or vice versa, thus rationalizing the work and making it more effective. This arrangement is possible because in all the Northern countries the church supporting the work is Lutheran. The languages, moreover, of the Northern countries are likewise closely related to one another - with the exception of the Finnish-speaking part of the population in Finland.

The various welfare committees set up by the respective governments are also very helpful and much social work is now being done by the seamen's churches.

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The various welfare committees set up by the respective governments are also very helpful and much social work is now being done by the seamen's churches.

Northern Conference for Hospital Chaplains.

60 clergymen in charge of the religious service in hospitals were gathered for a conference this summer at Järvenpää, Finland. At the conference, at which a number of topics dealing with the spiritual care of patients in hospitals were discussed, information was given that Finland and Norway are far ahead of the others with respect to employing fulltime ministers in hospitals. In each of the two countries there are 22 proper hospital chaplains as against only a few in Denmark and Sweden. In 7 of the 9 dioceses in Denmark regular meetings are conducted for ministers and physicians jointly in order to discuss common interests and tasks.

Northern Competition on Film about Foreign Missions.

Last year four of the biggest Northern missionary societies arranged a competition on the best script for a film dealing with foreign missions and another on the best text for a lantern slide series. The results are now available and both First Prizes have been won by a Danish lady missionary, Miss Gurli Vibe Jensen, who is actively engaged in mission work in the Sudan. She also won Third Prize in the competition on the lantern slide series. The title of the winning film script is "Bokti, That' Me" and the story gives an impression of the present African situation as experienced in the Sudan.

"Norea Radio" to Run Swedish Programmes as Well.

From October this year the "Norea Radio", run by the Norwegian Lutheran Mission and formerly broadcasting evangelical programmes in Norwegian from Tangier until this station was nationalized last year, will begin transmissions once more from the new station in Monte Carlo, erected by Trans World Rädio. Its strength will be 100,000 watts instead of the 10,000 watts of the station in Tangier so that a good reception in Norway may be expected.

The Evangelical National Missionary Society in Sweden has joined in with the Norwegian Lutheran Mission and, from November 1st next, will run a daily 30 minutes programme in Swedish.

DENMARK

Debate on Ecumenicity and Evangelical Alliance.

For many years a close relationship has existed between the Evangelical Alliance and the ecumenical movement in Denmark, a relationship which has been evident, among other things, in the fact that several Church men have been active on both fronts. Recently, however, Mr. Johs. Aagaard, University Lecturer, strongly attacked the Evangelical Alliance in the "Økumeniske Nyheder" organ of the Ecumenical Council in Denmark, of which he has become Editor. He feels that one must dissociate oneself from the line adopted by the Evangelical Alliance and that there is a gulf between Alliance and ecumenicity.

Mr. Aagaard writes that the Evangelical Alliance sets aside all Church and confessional realities, aiming at bringing Christ to men without heed to confession and church, while at the same time having established itself as a kind of confession with certain dogmas, such as the immortality of the soul, the eternal damnation of the godless, the Pope being anti-Christ, and with a fundamentalistic conception of the Bible. By putting a taboo on questions causing division among the churches the Alliance is well on the way towards sacrificing the seriousness of

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Christianity and ending up in religious social intercourse, according to Mr. Aagaard; and in contrast he points to the ecumenical movement which faces the differences of views squarely and provides the churches with an opportunity of meeting for conversations on the real issues of controversy.

In an article in the "Kristeligt Dagblad" the President of the Evangelical Alliance in Denmark, Rev. Georg Bartholdy, refutes the allegation that the Alliance is having its own confession and that the Alliance considers the questions dividing the churches unimportant. On the contrary, it is often stressed that opinions differ widely; but, instead of discussing these matters in detail as was usual in the 1930ies and 1940ies, the Alliance now leaves the debates to the ecumenical movement and concentrates rather on joint prayers, Bible study, and revival campaigns. Rev. G. Bartholdy regrets the fact that active members of the ecumenical movement cannot, or will not, see that the Kingdom of God is extended only through revivals and not by any conceptions of Church and ecumenicity, and that the work of the Alliance is not recognized as being truly ecumenical, but is passed by in silence or accused of heresy. He quotes a tatement some years ago by one of the prominent men in Swedish ecumenicity, Bishop Manfred Björkquist: "Now more than ever the Evangelical Alliance is needed as it is the soul of the ecumenical body". Although Mr. Bartholdy has some critical remarks about the official ecumenical effort he concludes by emphasizing its importance and necessity. But he also calls for recognition of the blessings of common Christian evangelization. "Let us not fight one another, nor let us bear false witness about our neighbour!"

Clergyman Opposed to Jews Becoming Christians.

A minister in the Danish Lutheran National Church, Rev. Poul Borchsenius, Randers, has attracted attention by declaring in an interview in the "Kristeligt Dagblad" that he is opposed to Jews becoming Christians and letting themselves be baptized. "I receive many requests for baptism from Jews", he says, "but I do my best to discourage them. I am actively opposed to Jewish assimilation into the Christian community."

Mr. Borchsenius even goes so far as to maintain that "there is one road to Heaven for Jews, Judaism, and another for Christians, Christianity", and in principle he dissociates himself from the Mission to Israel.

The "Kristeligt Dagblad" declares in a leader that the views of Rev. Poul Borchsenius are a blow against the New Testament message where Jews in particular are told that there is no salvation in any other name but Jesus Christ.

Mr. Borchsenius has announced that he is writing a book in which he will give a more detailed account of his views. He has previously written a number of books on the history of the Jewish people.

Free Churches Gain Admittance to Buildings belonging to the Lutheran National Church.

An amendment is expected to be brought in shortly to the Act on the use of church buildings, enabling the Free Churches to use the buildings of the Lutheran National Church for certain church functions. So far this has not been legally possible, but in practice churches have often been placed at the disposal of the Free Churches, for example at funerals, where the Free Church communities themselves were not able to provide suitable localities in the vicinity. The Ministry of Church Affairs has now taken steps to have the law revised. At a meeting during the summer the Bishops have set up a committee to go into the matter, but they are all known to be positively inclined towards the amendment.

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Misgivings of Free Church Leader about Faith and Order.

In a number of articles in the "Baptisternes Ugeblad" one of the Free Church leaders in Denmark, Rev. Johs. Nørgaard, has dealt with topical ecumenical questions. In these articles he discusses the various approaches to Church unity and expresses misgivings about the line adopted by the Board of the Faith and Order movement. Two tendencie with regard to the conception of Church unity are to be found within the World Council of Churches, he writes. The one stresses outward unity, hoping that the inward unity will develop from that in time; the other puts the main emphasis on an inward unity and hopes that the Churches will slowly grow together outwardly as well. It is Mr. Nørgaard's impression that most of the leaders within Faith and Order are in favour of the outward unity and, if this line should gain predominance everywhere, he cannot but feel that the Free Churches must then withdraw from the Faith and Order movement although still remaining members of the World Council of Churches. "It would, however, be against the whole tradition of Faith and Order if a one-sided stand were to be taken on this matter", he writes, and the meeting at St. Andrews in August revealed, as might be expected, a decided willingness to leave room for both points of view.

The Danish Church in South Slesvig and the German Regional Church.

In a communication to clergymen in West Jutland Bishop H. Dons Christensen, Ribe, has requested that the wish of German tourists for divine services in German in Danish churches should be met if a German minister on holiday is willing to officiate. For the last few years a great number of Germans have spent their holiday at the Danish West coast, and for the past four years now special services, which have been well attended, have been conducted on the island of Rømø. In an interview the Bishop emphasizes that it is right to sympathize with such wishes, even though the German Church in many places in South Slesvig has refused requests from Danish congregations for permission to use German churches for services conducted by Danish clergymen.

The Danish Church in South Slesvig, established as an association last year, now includes 48 congregations or smaller congregational circles. This information was given at the Danish church meeting in Slesvig this summer.

At the German church meeting in North Slesvig Bishop Reinhard Wester, Schleswig, expressed his appreciation of the good relations among church circles on both sides of the Danish-German frontier which he called the "frontier without tears". Referring to this, the Danish daily paper in South Slesvig, the "Dannevirke", appeals to the Bishop to work for the goal that Danish congregations in South Slesvig obtain the same privileges everywhere as the German congregations in North Slesvig enjoy by being allowed to conduct German services in Danish churches.

No Free Church Union in Denmark at Present.

Judging from the opposition from various quarters to a suggestion for uniting the Free Churches in Denmark in one "confessional church" it is evident that this will not be possible at present (see CN Nos. 51 and 59). A more detailed evaluation of the proposal made by Rev. Knud Wümpelmann of the Danish Baptist Church, has now been published in the Northern ecumenical periodical "Kristen Gemenskap". Mr. Wümpelmann feels that the proposal has been too greatly influenced by church unions in other countries, particularly by the one in South India, and summarizes his views as follows:

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"What we need most to-day is not an import of undigested church union constitutions from the Anglican-influenced foreign mission fields, however interesting and valuable they may be as study objects, but the will, in the given situation, to take one step forward at a time towards greater mutual respect and understanding and towards an ever closer co-operation; and the patience to persevere along this perhaps long and arduous road until eventually one day an amalgamation may seem to be the natural outcome of this journeying together in obedience to the Word of God."

News in Brief:

- The Diocese of Copenhagen has now been divided into two, the new Diocese being called the Diocese of Elsinore, and the new Cathedral to be St. Olai Church at Elsinore.

- The mission stations of the Danish Baptist Church in Ruanda Urundi in Africa have been recognized by the annual convocation of the Baptist Church as fully independent church communities, headed by native leaders.

- The Danish State Radio has planned a series of broadcasts on the Ten Commandments in modern light. Each Commandment will be thoroughly discussed by representatives of the Church as well as of non-religious circles.

- At the conference in Stockholm of the International Federation for Cremation, Rev. N.J. Rald, Copenhagen, was elected President.

- During the summer the Rev. Svend Borregaard has conducted Lutheran church services in English every Sunday morning for tourists in the Church of Thanksgiving in Copenhagen.

- Several hundred clowns and performers at fairs recently attended a special service at the Løgumkloster church in South Jutland. The service, which is becoming a cherished tradition, opened the annual "buffoons fair" in the town.

- The Danish lady missionary, Miss Ellen Nielsen, who chose to remain in China after all the other missionaries had left (see CN No. 55), has died recently, 89 years old.

FINLAND

Bishop Paavali Elected Orthodox Archbishop.

At a Church Synod in late August the Assistant Bishop Paavali was elected Archbishop in succession to the now 81 years old Archbishop Herman who wished to retire on account of age. The other candidate for the Archiepiskopate, Bishop Alexander, declined election. Archbishop Paavali, whose civic name is Yrjö Olmari, is 46 years old. He was born by Finnish parents in Leningrad (then St. Petersburg) and has been Assistant Bishop in the Finnish Orthodox Church since 1955. The new Archbishop will not be ordained until he has been officially appointed by the President of the Republic and the election has been approved by the ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople to whose jurisdiction the Orthodox Church in Finland belongs.

Leaders of Church Academies Meet at Järvenpää.

At the end of August some 70 leaders of church academies in a number of countries, mostly in Europe, but some in the U.S.A., South Africa, and Japan, met for a conference at the Laymen's Institute at Järvenpää. The Chairman of the conference, Dr. Hans Rinderknecht, said

that the main purpose of these annual conferences for academy leaders was to act as the instruments of the Church, to record what was going on outside the Church, and to find new ways and means for getting in touch with people, whether individually or in groups, who otherwise seldom come into contact with the church, as for instance, industrial workers and University trained people.

Dr. Peter Matthews from South Africa told about the special courses for youth leaders, journalists, and social workers established there, and said that plans were being made for conducting marriage schools for young people. Professor M. Tekanaka, Japan, said that the interest in Christianity has been increasing in Japan during the last few years and that a Chrstian Academy was founded there last February.

Almost 500 University People Attend Kirchentag.

This summer almost 500 University people attended the students' Kirchentag at Jyväskylä. The great number of participants was taken as a good omen for the Lutheran National Church in Finland, facing the tasks of a new decade. The motto of the conference was "Bring a New Sacrifice".

The participants of the Kirchentag passed a resolution, strongly advocating the division of big parishes. The resolution states that town parishes average a total population of 16,000 inhabitants and 5,000 person per clergyman. There are 5 parishes with more than 30,000 inhabitants, ans 12 with 20,000-30,000. Under such conditions it is impossible to build up a fruitful congregational fellowship, the students maintain. The resolution goes on to say that laymen ought to shoulder a considerable part of the responsibility for the congregation and its tasks of evangelization, and mentions a number of special assignments suitable for such service.

Major General on Importance of Revivals.

The Finnish Major General Eskil Peura has expressed a highly positive attitude towards Christianity and stressed the importance of revivals. Among other things, he said:

"The trials of the War, its desperate situations and heavy responsibilities made us turn to the Bible for strength. The War produced some "Doomsday religiousness", it is true, but at least we may say that there is still much spiritual life in our Army... People sometimes allege that a religious revival is detrimental to army discipline, but the situation is in fact quite the opposite. True repentance according to the Bible teaches people the meaning of obedience and of a true sense of responsibility. It is obvious that it means much to a person to achieve peace of mind through faith. Especially under the trials of war, face to face with death, inward peace is a real source of strength..."

Leader of Foreign Mission Society on the Problems in Africa.

The President of the Finnish Missionary Society, Rev. Olavi Vuorela, said on his return from a trip to Africa this summer:

"The present situation in Africa places an unprecedented responsibility on the shoulders of young African Christians. When only still adolescents they must make up their minds on social issues and critical problems which even "old" Christians often shirk. We must feel truly responsible for the world as it is to-day. As Christians from the Western countries we are guilty of such remissness that it is no longer possible to make amend for it again. And what the Churches and missions can do is negligible in comparison with what one ought to have had strength to do.

At the moment our great concern is to find out how the developing young Churches on our mission fields may best be helped to the greatest possible amount of independence, but at the same time we must remember that the very steps aiming at Church independence usually require time."

Church Pamphlet Emphasizes Responsibility of Motorists.

On the recommendation of the Bishops of the Lutheran National Church a pamphlet has been published in Finland, which is distributed to all who apply to church offices for testimonials needed for a driver's certificate. The pamphlet strongly stresses the responsibility of all motorists, enjoining them to drive with restraint, conscientiously, and never under influence of spirits. Consideration of pedestrians, especially elderly people and children, is particularly emphasized, and at the end the pamphlet reads:

"I will collect my thoughts in prayer and in the following words: I will guard life, mine own as well as that of others, and accept the responsibility always resting with a driver of motor vehicles. When at the wheel I will always act in accordance with this responsibility and count the good of my neighbour higher than my own."

Number of Jehova's Witnesses Increasing.

A recently published statistics on the number of members of the various church communities and religions in Finland reveals that the Jehova's Witnesses had 1.000 new adherents last year, the total thus amounting to 6,800. The Orthodox Church went down by 700 to 72,800 and the Lutheran National Church increased by 28,000 to [illegible],357,600 members. The number of people not belonging to any religious community amounts to 282,000.

ICELAND

Bishop of Iceland Publishes Pastoral Letter.

The new Bishop of Iceland, Bishop Sigurbjørn Einarsson, has published a pastoral letter in the shape of a book of 200 pages, entitled "Light over the Country", in which he deals with a number of problems in connection with the Church, the Scriptures, Baptism and Holy Communion, Children, Young and Old, Clergy, and Congregations.

NORWAY

Soon Women Ministers Also in Norway?

The 59 years old woman graduate, Mrs. Ingrid Bjerkås, will possibly be the first woman pastor in Norway. For several years now it has been legally possible for women to take orders in Norway, but so far no woman has asked for ordination. Now, however, Mrs. Bjerkås wishes to take Holy Orders and is applying for office in the Dioces of Hamar, where Bishop Kristian Schjelderup is willing to ordain women.

Bishop Alf Wiig of the Diocese of North Hålogaland has likewise declared himself in favour of women ministers. In an interview on the occasion that five livings in this diocese in North Norway had been advertised vacant several times without receiving any applications, the Bishop says: "I shall extend a hearty welcome to any woman pastor coming to my diocese." As for the matter of principle involved, the Bishop says that the opposition to women ministers is due to a mistaken

interpretation of St. Paul, and that in his opinion a woman should have the same access to the pulpit as a man.

Bishop Arne Fjellbu, Trondheim, who is to retire shortly on account of age, says in a conversation with the religious daily paper "Vårt Land" in Oslo that after having studied the matter for several years he has come to the conclusion that neither in the Bible nor in the Confession can anything to be found to prevent women from being ordained. But the Bible stresses the point that all must be done with order and decency, for which reason the problem must be solved, not by the State or as a suffragette issue, but by the Church.

New Office for Women in the Norwegian Lutheran National Church.

The Bishops of the Norwegian Lutheran National Church are supporting a proposal for establishing a new office in the Church which should be open for women divinity graduates without ordination. This office will include visiting service, Sunday schools, youth work, Bible study groups, etc. The Board of the association for "Kristen Indsats for uløste Opgaver" (Christian Endeavour for Unsolved Tasks) has donated 27,000 Norwegian crowns for the purpose, and in several places in Norway efforts are being made to begin this service.

For the time being the posts will be established on a voluntary basis, receiving no financial support from the Church Department of the Government.

Many members of the Church had hoped that the establishment of this new office might prevent the issue of women pastors coming to a head.

Scandinavia Facing New Revivals?

The well-known American missionary and revivalist preacher, Mr. Stanley Jones, has visited Scandinavia this summer where he has conducted "ashrams" in both Sweden and Norway. In the course of an address delivered in Oslo, Mr. Stanley Jones took an optimistic view of the spiritual future in the Northern countries. Among other things, he said:

"I believe that Scandinavia is on the threshold of a new sweeping revival. You will eventually grow tired of the emptiness into which modern secularization has led your countries and will return to the knowledge that Jesus is Lord and that He alone is able to fill your lives with meaning and purpose."

Freedom of Religion Included in the Norwegian Constitution.

So far the Norwegian Constitution has contained no article providing for freedom of religion, but now a Bill for a revision of the Consitution has been drawn up by the Committee appointed to work out an amendment to the Act on Free Churches. Four different wordings of the article on freedom of religion have been proposed, one of which runs as follows: "All citizens are entitled to pursue their religion freely within the limits of law and decency".

Norwegian Representatives at Lausanne Appeal for Increased Efforts.

On their return home the Norwegian representatives at the European Christian youth conference at Lausanne have published an appeal to the Norwegian Christian young people to consider seriously the possibility of offering their services for shorter or longer periods in the technical-economic or cultural building up of the developing countries; at the same time they could serve as Christian witnesses. In this connection the establishment is requested of an inter-denominational

body, perhaps attached to the Norwegian Missionary Council, which might secure information about actual needs, distribute this information, and provide the necessary extra training of young people volunteering for service. It is further advocated that the Norwegian aid to the developing countries, which in 1959 amounted to 10 million crowns, should be increased so that in 10-20 years the total sum might equal the one received by Norway through the Marshall Help, viz. 1,300 million crowns. In a statement to the "Vårt Land" the President of the Norwegian Missionary Council, Mr. Tormod Vågen, says that for several years already the Norwegian foreign mission societies have been sending young people with technical or financial training to developing countries, and that the present request will be considered with sympathy at the next Council meeting. - As a matter of fact, the Norwegian Missionary Society has resolved to co-operate with the Lutheran World Federation in appointing people for limited terms of time, especially young people willing to make a contribution in the fields of health, education, or religious work.

Another statement expressing the views of some of the members of the Lausanne Conference recommends setting up an official national joint council of the various denominations, and an ecumenical youth council to deal with youth problems of a common Christian and ecumenical nature.

Laymen to Assist at the Eucharist.

The Bishops of the Lutheran National Church in Norway have recommended that permission should be given for laymen to assist at the Eucharist when needed. The proposal says that ministers in consultation with the parish council may nominate a layman who commands general confidence in the congregation as assistant at Holy Communion. Three of the Bishops wanted the word "layman" substituted by "lay Christian", thus underlining that also women might be nominated for such service.

The proposal has been submitted to the Diocesan Councils, meeting with no objections in principle.

Norway's Baptists Celebrate Centenary.

At the end of last month the Norwegian Baptist Church celebrated its centenary by a gala function at the Town Hall of Oslo at which 2,000 guests were present. Among the many speakers was also Bishop Johs. Smemo, Oslo of the Norwegian Lutheran Church who said, among other things:

"In the course of years both Baptists and Lutherans have fired at one another with live cartridges, so to speak, but such days of bitter conflict are now over. By sticking to their guns, the Baptists became the champions of freedom of faith and conscience under the conditions of a National Church. On behalf of the Lutheran National Church, therefore, I wish to thank the Baptist Church and I pray sincerely that God may bless their future work in our country."

Still More Protests Against Curriculum for Public Schools.

During the summer the Government Department for Church and Education has received resolutions adopted by a number of national church assemblies in which the participants protest against the proposed normative curriculum for the public schools, drawn up by the Experimental Council, as this curriculum leaves considerably less time than at present for religious instruction and introduces dancing as a school subject (see CN Nos. 57 and 58). The curriculum has not yet been discussed in the Stortinget (Parliament). Among the addresses is one from the Pentecostal Movement, supporting the demand for letting religion keep its

former status. This is probably the first time a Free Church community has recommended instruction in Lutheran Christianity in the schools.

In answer to an enquiry in the Stortinget the Minister of Education has confirmed the fact that local school inspectors are entitled to allow more time for religion than suggested in the curriculum, a right which has been made use of in many places all over the country.

News in Brief:

- 16 o/o of all marriages in Norway in 1959 were civic marriages. There was a slight increase in the number of church weddings.

- The Rector of the Practical Theological Seminary of the University of Oslo, Rev. Arne Fjelberg, has died, 53 years old.

- In answer to a question in the Stortinget the Norwegian Minister of Church Affairs, Mr. Helge Sivertsen, has declared that he cannot, and will not, refuse the Mormons permission to photograph old parish registers kept in the public Record Office (see CN No. 58).

- At its annual conference the Norwegian Mission Covenant Church resolved that its mission church in the French Congo is to be independent and have native leaders. During a visit to Ngaoundere the President of the Camerouns, Mr. Ahidjo, who is a Moslem, has decorated the Norwegian missionary, Mr. Halvdan Endersen, with the highest order of the Camerouns.

SWEDEN

Two New Types of Layman Work.

The Swedish Bishops' Conference, which met from September 19th-21st decided to establish two new types of layman work in the local churches: There will be parish secretaries with a standard of education and salary corresponding to that of clergymen and high school teachers, and parish assistants with a standard of education and salary corresponding to that of elementary school teachers. Both categories of parish workers shall have theological university education and practical training at different church institutions. There shall be equal admission for men and women. The work will consist in soul cure, group work, organized study work and activities among children and youth.

Plebiscite on State/Church in 5 Years?

Rev. Åke Zetterberg, Dean of Stockholm, who is a member of the Government committee studying the future relationship between the State and the Lutheran National Church, stated at a meeting at Västerås, that in the middle of the 1960ies a plebiscite might be expected on the separation of the Church from or its continued connection with the State.

The Dean further said that for the present the many intricate questions are being examined by a committee of experts. When that work is finished the large and comprehensive Investigation Committee will tackle the problems, and finally the material will be submitted to Government and Parliament to decide on further action.

Social-Democratic Reasons for Preservation of the State Church.

As mentioned in CN No. 54, the Swedish Social-Democratic Party has discarded the demand for the abolition of the State Church from the Party platform and included the following provision instead: The relation between State and Church should be regulated in accordance with the principle of religious freedom.

The reason for this is possibly in wide circles a more positive attitude to the Church, but that it may also be one of political tactics is revealed by an article by Mr. Lennart Andersson in the "Dala-Demokraten" which has caused some attention. The article gives a picture of the importance of Christianity and Church in the Swedish people, and as background of the Socialistic ideals. But precisely because the Church is such an important factor, the Party should be heedful of the manner in which official worship is conducted. Mr. Andersson feels that the safest policy is to maintain the system of a National Church. "In case of a separation between Church and State, the Church would most likely be able to manage, but we should lose all control over and knowledge about the activities of the Church", he writes, and the Social-Democratic leader is afraid that this might have undreamt-of consequences as the non-Socialist Parties are tremendously over-represented in the Church and might employ it as a very effective means of propaganda without society being able to intervene.

The Right of Veto of the Church Assembly and the Free Theological Faculties.

In a big article in the "Ny Kyrklig Tidskrift" about the Lutheran National Church, Bishop Arvid Runestam describes the Church Assembly's right of veto in connection with church legislation as of "secondary importance" compared with the value of having free theological faculties at which Church ministers might be trained.

The "Svensk Pastoraltidskrift", the organ of the Confessional Front, protests against this view. Of course free faculties would be of great value, but at the same time the Church Assembly and its right of veto is something which the Church in no circumstances can go without.

"To all appearances", the article runs, "the present Constitutional Committee will propose the abolition of the right of veto of the Church Assembly, giving as reason that there should be no other legislative body in the State beside Government and Parliament. This view shows that the position of the Church as a unique phenomenon in society has not been grasped. In spite of all short-comings and self-despair the Church Assembly is the last safeguard of the independence of the Church and its disappearance would constitute a decisive victory for the point of view that the Church is 'a religious enterprise organized by the State', thus leaving the Church at the complete mercy of the State... Those in power must be left in no doubt whatever that the inevitable consequence of an abolition of the Church Assembly would be a separation of State and Church." The periodical refers to a statement in 1957 by the present Archbishop Dr. Hultgren that "an increased dependence on the State would be so fatal that a separation with all its disadvantages would be preferable."

Swedish Baptists Changing their Minds on Integration?

Among the organizations in the Swedish Missionary Council who made reservations in regard to the approval of the proposed integration between the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council was the Swedish Baptist Church (see CN No. 59).

In this connection the organ of the Baptist Church, the "Vecko-Posten" expresses the opinion that this decision "cannot be the last word in the matter". The co-operation in the Missionary Council can hardly be as extensive in the future, the paper feels, if it is to be divided on the issue of international relations. The paper further deplores that the Swedish Baptists, especially with regard to the contributions to relief work made by the World Council of Churches, have not been able to adopt the same line of action as the Baptist groups who are already doing a valuable piece of work within the World Council of Churches.

Replies Awaiting Reply from Inquirers

John Hedlund Leading Crusade in Stockholm.

From August 20th - October 2nd the well-known revivalist preacher, Mr. John Hedlund is leading an evangelization "crusade" in Stockholm in co-operation with the Swedish Mission Covenant Church. 200 helpers have been trained for the drive and a chorus of 250 members are assisting. Meetings are held 5 times a week in a big tent from which the meeting on the opening Sunday was transmitted on television.

Swedish Missionaries Return to the Congo.

The majority of the roughly 100 Swedish missionaries working in the former Belgian Congo were forced to flee when the present disturbances began, many of them under dramatic and highly dangerous conditions. A great number are now on their way back in answer to the earnest appeal for their return from the native population. The appeal was addressed to the Congolese authorities who passed it on to the representative of the missionaries on the Protestant Council in Leopoldville. Some 50 missionaries belonging to the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden are working in the former Belgian Congo, and the Baptist Church employs a similar number. The Swedish Press has been deeply interested in the fate of the missionaries and in the mission work altogether. A collection in aid of distressed people in the Congo which was started by the two denominations has obtained a very great number of donations.

The Baptist Church, moreover, has resolved at its annual conference this summer that the management of the congregations in the Congo is to be handed over to the Congolese themselves as soon as practically feasible

News in Brief:

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- Professor Gunnar Westin has resigned as Chairman of the Swedish Baptist Church Board and has been succeeded by Mr. Gösta Sterne, Sub-Manager.

- Bishop Torsten Ysander died on September 25th, 67 years old. He was bishop of Visby from 1936-1947 and of Linköping from 1947-1959.

- The new bishop of Lund, Dr. Martin Lindström, was ordained by Archbishop Dr. Gunnar Hultgren in the Cathedral of Uppsala on September 25th.

- The Swedish contribution to the World Refugee Year amounted to a final sum of 30 mill. Swedish crowns, of which 11 mill. crowns were granted by the State and the rest collected by the relief organizations.

- The Swedish journalist and missionary, Mr. Bengt Simonsson, of the Methodist Church, has left for Africa in order to take part in the training of African journalists at the school established by the World Council of Churches at Kitwe in North Rhodesia.

- At a conference in Stockholm this summer a world organization for Christian temperance work was established under the name of "World Christian Temperance Federation". Dr. Hans Schäffner, Switzerland, World Secretary of the "Blue Cross" movement (Christian temperance society), was elected President.

- Sweden is to have its first pre-fabricated church. It will be built in single units in a factory and then moved to the island of Vrangö outside Gothenburg. It will seat 300 people and cost only app. 120,000 Swedish crowns.

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- During the summer representatives of a number of religious communities and organizations have approached Government with the request that action be taken against the over growing flood of cheap and vulgar papers and bad films.

- The Swedish Missionary Bishop, Bishop Helge Fosseus, has been elected President of the United Lutheran Zulu Church which was established this summer in South Africa. The term of office is 5 years after which time one hopes to be able to elect a native leader. The Zulu Church has 80,000 baptized members and covers former German, Norwegian, and Swedish mission fields.